

# PRAYER FOR LIVING

DAILY REFLECTIONS FOR  
LITURGICAL YEAR B ~ SEPTEMBER

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VERBUM DEI MISSIONARIES



# Prayer for Living Year B

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**Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> September, 22<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**Colossians 1:1-8, Luke 4:38-44**

*Leaving the synagogue Jesus went to Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in the grip of a high fever and they asked him to do something for her. Standing over her he rebuked the fever and it left her. And she immediately got up and began to serve them. At sunset all those who had friends suffering from diseases of one kind or another brought them to him, and laying his hands on each he cured them. Devils too came out of many people, shouting, 'You are the Son of God.' But he warned them and would not allow them to speak because they knew that he was the Christ. When daylight came he left the house and made his way to a lonely place. The crowds went to look for him, and when they had caught up with him they wanted to prevent him leaving them, but he answered, 'I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns too, because that is what I was sent to do.' And he continued his proclamation in the synagogues of Judaea.*

#### Time given to God is never wasted

In the gospel today, we see Jesus attending to the sick people by healing them and reaching out to those in need. Yet, he took time to go off to a lonely place where He could be alone in prayer with God the Father. From how Jesus spent His time, we have a good indicator of what He truly valued, i.e. being with God in prayer and being in service to those in need. Prayer was Jesus' top priority. His prayerful union with God was the source of energy, joy, enthusiasm, and love for His mission.

On the other hand, we tend to view prayer as a waste of time, especially when there are so many things that need to be done. As we contemplate on Jesus going to a lonely place to pray, let us be drawn to the reality that time spent with God is never a waste of time. It is from our relationship with God that we get our daily strength and discern His will for us.

#### **Question for reflection:**

How can I make prayer a priority?

**Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 22<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**Colossians 1:9-14, Luke 5:1-11**

*Jesus was standing one day by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the crowd pressing round him listening to the word of God, when he caught sight of two boats at the water's edge. The fishermen had got out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats -- it was Simon's -- and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water and pay out your nets for a catch.' Simon replied, 'Master, we worked hard all night long and caught nothing, but if you say so, I will pay out the nets.' And when they had done this they netted such a huge number of fish that their nets began to tear, so they signalled to their companions in the other boat to come and help them; when these came, they filled both boats to sinking point. When Simon Peter saw this he fell at the knees of Jesus saying, 'Leave me, Lord; I am a sinful man.' For he and all his companions were completely awestruck at the catch they had made; so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. But Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on it is people you will be catching.' Then, bringing their boats back to land they left everything and followed him.*

#### We worked hard and caught nothing

*"Master, we worked hard all night long and caught nothing, but if you say so, I will pay out the nets."*. With these words, Peter revealed his frustration at having caught nothing despite working hard all night long. Let us pause and allow these words to speak to our experiences. We live in a society that values achievements and results. Therefore, if someone does not perform and produce results, he/she is often regarded as a failure. Interestingly, Jesus did not wait for Peter to have a successful catch before coming to encounter him. He met Peter precisely when he felt tired after a night of hard work with futile results and used this moment to draw Peter to Him. When Jesus told Peter to cast his nets for a catch, Peter did as he was told and had a fruitful catch.

In one way or another, we have experienced disappointments in life. Yet, Jesus draws us out of the loss and frustration and brings us deeper into an experience of faith. He tells us today, "*Do not be afraid, I am here. Follow me!*"

### **Question for reflection:**

What is Jesus' invitation to me as I pray with the passage?

**Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September, St. Gregory the Great.**

**Colossians 1:15-20, Luke 5:33-39**

*The Pharisees and the scribes said to him, 'John's disciples are always fasting and saying prayers, and the disciples of the Pharisees, too, but yours go on eating and drinking.' Jesus replied, 'Surely you cannot make the bridegroom's attendants fast while the bridegroom is still with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them; then, in those days, they will fast.' He also told them a parable, 'No one tears a piece from a new cloak to put it on an old cloak; otherwise, not only will the new one be torn, but the piece taken from the new will not match the old. And nobody puts new wine in old wineskins; otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins and run to waste, and the skins will be ruined. No; new wine must be put in fresh skins. And nobody who has been drinking old wine wants new. "The old is good," he says.'*

### Our faith, a living tradition

The religious leaders criticised Jesus' disciples for not fasting. Jesus stood up for them by comparing Himself as the bridegroom, and the disciples were in this festive celebration because they were with Him. He also used the image of new wine because there were joy and newness to what He said and did. Jesus invited the Pharisees and the scribes to have new wineskins, i.e. a new openness and attitude, in order to enjoy His presence among them. He was not rejecting the Jewish traditions, but He went beyond them and offered a new understanding of God and new ways of relating with Him.

Today, we need to have this new wineskin and not simply stay in old ways and attitudes. Jesus always brings newness to our lives, and we need to go where He leads us instead of being stuck in our old ways and mentalities. Our Christian faith is a living tradition, not a dead letter. May we experience the relevance and freshness of His word and presence in our lives.

**Question for reflection:**

Is there anything that might hold me back to the newness that Jesus brings?

**Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> September, 22<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**Colossians 1:21-23, Luke 6:1-5**

*One Sabbath he was walking through the cornfields, and his disciples were picking ears of corn, rubbing them in their hands and eating them. Some of the Pharisees said, 'Why are you doing something that is forbidden on the Sabbath day?' Jesus answered them, 'So you have not read what David did when he and his followers were hungry- how he went into the house of God and took the loaves of the offering and ate them and gave them to his followers, loaves which the priests alone are allowed to eat?' And he said to them, 'The Son of man is master of the Sabbath.'*

**To have the same priority as Jesus**

Once again, the Pharisees judged the actions of Jesus' disciples and criticised Him for not stopping them from picking the ears of the corn, rubbing them in their hands and eating them. This was because what the disciples did, in the eyes of these religious leaders, was an act of breaking the Sabbath law. On the other hand, Jesus allowed His disciples to do what they did because they were hungry. For Jesus, the human person and fulfilling his/her basic needs are important.

We, as Jesus' disciples, also need to have His same central priority. Human norms and regulations must always be at the service of the person and for his/her development and happiness. Thus, let us not be fixated on following the letter of the law, but look at Jesus and contemplate His heart that constantly seeks to love and do good for others.

**Question for reflection:**

How can I respond to the needs of others with love?

**Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> September, 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

**Isaiah 35:4-7, James 2:1-5, Mark 7:31-37**

*Returning from the territory of Tyre, Jesus went by way of Sidon towards the Lake of Galilee, right through the Decapolis territory. And they*

*brought him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they asked him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside to be by themselves, away from the crowd, put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue with spittle. Then looking up to heaven he sighed; and he said to him, 'Ephphatha,' that is, 'Be opened.' And his ears were opened, and at once the impediment of his tongue was loosened and he spoke clearly. And Jesus ordered them to tell no one about it, but the more he insisted, the more widely they proclaimed it. Their admiration was unbounded, and they said, 'Everything he does is good, he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.'*

### Open my ears, Lord!

In the gospel, Jesus journeyed through the Decapolis region, a non-Jewish territory and ministered to the non-Jews. This shows us that Jesus' love did not discriminate. Nobody was excluded from the healing touch of Jesus. Today, Jesus invites us to follow Him in His way of loving, i.e. a love that has no boundaries. Some people brought a deaf man to Jesus. He drew close to the deaf man and healed him. When this deaf man was healed, he not only could hear, but he also lost his speech impediment.

We, too, can sometimes be deaf in the sense that we are deaf to God. When we are deaf to God, we cut ourselves off from what truly matters in life: loving others. In this time of prayer, let us ask Jesus to touch our ears of our hearts to listen to the word of God, and to loosen our tongues so that we can speak healing words to others and to open the doors of our hearts so that we can become sensitive to the needs of others.

### **Question for reflection:**

How can I allow Jesus to love through me today?

**Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> September, 23<sup>rd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**Colossians 1:24-2:3, Luke 6:6-11**

*On the Sabbath Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach, and a man was present, and his right hand was withered. The scribes and the Pharisees were watching him to see if he would cure somebody on the Sabbath, hoping to find something to charge him with. But he knew their thoughts; and he said to the man with the withered hand, 'Get up and stand out in the middle!' And he came forward and stood there. Then*

*Jesus said to them, 'I put it to you: is it permitted on the Sabbath to do good, or to do evil; to save life, or to destroy it?' Then he looked round at them all and said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He did so, and his hand was restored. But they were furious and began to discuss the best way of dealing with Jesus.*

### To look for opportunities to do what is good and loving

The religious leaders were watching Jesus with suspicion, hoping that He would make a wrong move so that they could find something to charge Him with. When Jesus healed the man with the withered hand, they could see this act as good but were furious because He had broken the Sabbath law. As we read the passage, let us reflect on our attitude towards people, especially those whom we tend to regard with negativity. Often, we fail to see the good in them and their actions. Allow Jesus to clean the lenses through which we view them so that we can learn to look at them beyond their faults and imperfections.

Jesus entered the synagogue and saw the man with the withered hand with compassion. Despite knowing that He would anger the scribes and the Pharisees, He chose to do good and save life. Today, He calls us to do the same.

### **Question for reflection:**

How can I choose to “do good” and “save life”, instead of being preoccupied with looking out for people’s mistakes and limitations?

**Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> September, 23<sup>rd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**Colossians 2:6-15, Luke 6:12-19**

*Jesus went onto the mountain to pray; and he spent the whole night in prayer to God. When day came he summoned his disciples and picked out twelve of them; he called them 'apostles': Simon whom he called Peter, and his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot who became a traitor. He then came down with them and stopped at a piece of level ground where there was a large gathering of his disciples, with a great crowd of people from all parts of Judaea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon who had come to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. People tormented by unclean spirits were also cured, and everyone in*

*the crowd was trying to touch him because power came out of him that cured them all.*

### Jesus, a man of prayer

*"Jesus went onto the mountain to pray; and he spent the whole night in prayer to God".* Jesus spent the whole night in prayer with God because He needed to make an important decision. He had to choose some people to be His disciples, and He spent time in silence and solitude with God. The choice of the twelve disciples was the fruit of His prayer. There are moments in life when we need to make important decisions. Do we dedicate time and space to listen to God and be guided by Him?

However, despite spending time in prayer before choosing these disciples, things did not work out well for Jesus. Judas would trade Jesus' life for 30 silver coins, Peter would deny Him three times, and the rest would run away at the sight of their Master on the cross. Prayer does not guarantee that problems would be solved, relationships would be perfect, etc. Rather, prayer is the means to a deeper union of love with God. In Him, we find daily strength and peace.

### **Question for reflection:**

Am I a person of prayer?

### **Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> September, The Nativity of Mary.**

**Micah 5:1-4 or Romans 8:28-30, Matthew 1: 1-16, 18-23**

*Roll of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham: Abraham fathered Isaac, Isaac fathered Jacob, Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers, Judah fathered Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez fathered Hezron, Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab, Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon, Salmon fathered Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz fathered Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed fathered Jesse; and Jesse fathered King David. David fathered Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife, Solomon fathered Rehoboam, Rehoboam fathered Abijah, Abijah fathered Asa, Asa fathered Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat fathered Joram, Joram fathered Uzziah, Uzziah fathered Jotham, Jotham fathered Ahaz, Ahaz fathered Hezekiah, Hezekiah fathered Manasseh, Manasseh fathered Amon, Amon fathered Josiah; and Josiah fathered Jechoniah and his brothers. Then the deportation to Babylon took place. After the*

*deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah fathered Shealtiel, Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel, Zerubbabel fathered Abiud, Abiud fathered Eliakim, Eliakim fathered Azor, Azor fathered Zadok, Zadok fathered Achim, Achim fathered Eliud, Eliud fathered Eleazar, Eleazar fathered Matthan, Matthan fathered Jacob; and Jacob fathered Joseph the husband of Mary; of her was born Jesus who is called Christ. This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being an upright man and wanting to spare her disgrace, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: Look! the virgin is with child and will give birth to a son whom they will call Immanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'.*

### God works all things for good

As we contemplate the genealogy of Jesus, we cannot help but notice that there are the good and the bad, the perfect and the imperfect, the saints and the sinners. Despite the messy lives of these people, God writes the story of love and faith with crooked lines. Out of this melange, Jesus was born. As we reflect on the family tree of Jesus, we might perhaps look at our limitations and feel like we too are "crooked lines". The good news is that we can rejoice at the reality that God's love always bring some good out of our broken and imperfect lives.

The central figure in Jesus' family tree is Mary, whose birthday we celebrate today. God called Mary who, in the eyes of the society, was regarded as an insignificant and a nobody. Yet, God used her life to be the mother of Jesus. Today, God wants to use us, imperfect and insignificant as we are, to continue the work of the incarnation by bringing Christ's life through our words, actions, decisions and life.

### **Question for reflection:**

What is the message that God has for me today?

**Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> September, 23<sup>rd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**Colossians 3:12-17, Luke 6:27-38**

*Jesus said to his disciples: 'I say this to you who are listening: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly. To anyone who slaps you on one cheek, present the other cheek as well; to anyone who takes your cloak from you, do not refuse your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and do not ask for your property back from someone who takes it. Treat others as you would like people to treat you. If you love those who love you, what credit can you expect? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit can you expect? For even sinners do that much. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to get money back, what credit can you expect? Even sinners lend to sinners to get back the same amount. Instead, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend without any hope of return. You will have a great reward, and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and there will be gifts for you: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap; because the standard you use will be the standard used for you.'*

### Love because God loves you

*"Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly".* From our life experiences, we realise that it is not easy to love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, and give without any expectation of a return. We struggle to love with selfless love. Yet, Jesus today reminds us that God "*is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked*", and He calls us, who are God's children, to be loving and compassionate as He is.

In the first reading, St. Paul also calls us to live a life of love. He says, "*You should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. Over these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love*". We can reflect God's love because, as St. Paul states in

the opening line, “*He (God) loves you*”. Being loved by God unconditionally, we have the strength and courage to build relationships of real love with others.

**Question for reflection:**

How can I be a reflection of God’s love today?

**Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> September, 23<sup>rd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**1 Timothy 1:1-2, 12-14, Luke 6:39-42**

*Jesus told a parable to the disciples, 'Can one blind person guide another? Surely both will fall into a pit? Disciple is not superior to teacher; but fully trained disciple will be like teacher. Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the great log in your own? How can you say to your brother, "Brother, let me take out that splinter in your eye," when you cannot see the great log in your own? Hypocrite! Take the log out of your own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take out the splinter in your brother's eyes.'*

**Mercy was shown to me**

*"I used to be a blasphemer and did all I could to injure and discredit the faith. Mercy, however, was shown to me..."* These are St. Paul's words in today's first reading. He judged and persecuted the early Christians because he was blind to the plank in his own eyes. He regarded himself as righteous and deemed the rest as sinners. Yet, along the journey to Damascus, he encountered Jesus, who led him to walk the journey of learning to see others and himself with the eyes of mercy and love.

We tend to look at people negatively and often judge them for their mistakes and weaknesses, while we are blind to our own faults. It is essential to acknowledge that we do not have a complete insight into other people, and thus, we can never judge them. Instead, let us ask Jesus to help us see the plank that we have in our eyes and heal us from our blindness. May we learn to look at others with mercy in the same way that Jesus looks at us with His merciful love.

**Question for reflection:**

What prevents me from looking at others with mercy?

**Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> September, 23<sup>rd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**1 Timothy 1:15-17, Luke 6:43-49**

*Jesus said to his disciples: 'There is no sound tree that produces rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree that produces sound fruit. Every tree can be told by its own fruit: people do not pick figs from thorns, nor gather grapes from brambles. Good people draw what is good from the store of goodness in their hearts; bad people draw what is bad from the store of badness. For the words of the mouth flow out of what fills the heart. 'Why do you call me, "Lord, Lord" and not do what I say? Everyone who comes to me and listens to my words and acts on them -- I will show you what such a person is like. Such a person is like the man who, when he built a house, dug, and dug deep, and laid the foundations on rock; when the river was in flood it bore down on that house but could not shake it, it was so well built. But someone who listens and does nothing is like the man who built a house on soil, with no foundations; as soon as the river bore down on it, it collapsed; and what a ruin that house became!'*

#### I stand firm on Jesus, my foundation

Jesus is the Rock, the firm foundation on which we are called to build our lives. We build our lives on Jesus when we choose to listen to His words and live out His words in our daily life.

In the parable of the two houses, the difference between them is their foundation. One house was built on sand, and the other was on a rock. When the river was in flood, the house on sand was the one that collapsed. Pondering on this image of the two houses, Jesus is inviting us to build our lives on a solid foundation so that we will not collapse when we face the storms of hardships and disappointments. Let us allow Jesus' words to shape our lives today because He is the reliable foundation we can stand on! When we build our lives on Jesus, we help others to do the same too. In these uncertain times of the Covid-19 pandemic, as many people feel the storms bearing down on them, may we stand firm and guide others to make Jesus their solid foundation.

#### **Question for reflection:**

How is the quality of the foundation on which I build my life?

**Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> September, 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

**Isaiah 50:5-9, James 2:14-18, Mark 8:27-35**

*Jesus and his disciples left for the villages round Caesarea Philippi. On the way he put this question to his disciples, 'Who do people say I am?' And they told him, 'John the Baptist, others Elijah, others again, one of the prophets.' 'But you,' he asked them, 'who do you say I am?' Peter spoke up and said to him, 'You are the Christ.' And he gave them strict orders not to tell anyone about him. Then he began to teach them that the Son of man was destined to suffer grievously, and to be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and to be put to death, and after three days to rise again; and he said all this quite openly. Then, taking him aside, Peter tried to rebuke him. But, turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said to him, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are thinking not as God thinks, but as human beings do.' He called the people and his disciples to him and said, 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me. Anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.'*

### Following the suffering Messiah

When Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do you say I am?", Peter answered, "You are the Christ". However, Peter's understanding of Messiah was one who would destroy the Roman empire and free Israel from the yoke of oppression. Jesus, on the other hand, saw Himself as the Messiah who would suffer and die under the Romans. Peter rejected this idea of Messiah that Jesus came to reveal and did not see himself as following this path of suffering and death. Therefore, Jesus rebuked Peter for having such worldly vision. He wanted those who follow Him to have God's mindset. Thus, He began to patiently shift the perspective of His disciples so that they could understand His meaning of Messiahship.

Today, Jesus invites us to allow Him to change our way of thinking because the way we think will influence how we follow Him. Peter struggled to embrace a suffering Messiah, and thus, he ended up denying Him. What about us? Do we embrace a suffering Christ? Will we deny ourselves, carry our cross and follow Him?

### **Questions for reflection:**

For me, who is Jesus? What does it mean to follow Him?

## **Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> September, St. John Chrysostom.**

### **1 Timothy 2:1-8, Luke 7:1-10**

*When Jesus had come to the end of all he wanted the people to hear, he went into Capernaum. A centurion there had a servant, a favourite of his, who was sick and near death. Having heard about Jesus he sent some Jewish elders to him to ask him to come and heal his servant. When they came to Jesus they pleaded earnestly with him saying, 'He deserves this of you, because he is well disposed towards our people; he built us our synagogue himself.' So Jesus went with them, and was not very far from the house when the centurion sent word to him by some friends to say to him, 'Sir, do not put yourself to any trouble because I am not worthy to have you under my roof; and that is why I did not presume to come to you myself; let my boy be cured by your giving the word. For I am under authority myself, and have soldiers under me; and I say to one man, "Go," and he goes; to another, "Come here," and he comes; to my servant, "Do this," and he does it.' When Jesus heard these words he was astonished at him and, turning round, said to the crowd following him, 'I tell you, not even in Israel have I found faith as great as this.' And when the messengers got back to the house they found the servant in perfect health.*

#### The love and faith of the centurion

The Roman centurion was kind to the Jewish people and even built a synagogue for them. When he heard that Jesus was in town, he sent some Jewish elders to ask Him to heal His servant, who was seriously sick. This centurion loved with an inclusive love- He cared for the Jews and showed concern for his servant. He was also a person of faith. He sent a message to Jesus, saying "...let my boy be cured by your giving the word". He believed that Jesus could heal his servant just by the power of His word. Jesus was amazed by the extraordinary faith of this centurion.

This Roman centurion is a model of love and faith. Often, we distance ourselves from others who are different from us or those we regard as inferiors. Let us learn to have a heart of kindness to all, regardless of their race, religion and status. Let us ask Jesus to increase our faith so that we can trust in His word.

**Question for reflection:**

What can the Roman centurion teach me about love for others and faith in God?

**Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> September, The exaltation of the Holy Cross.**

**Numbers 21:4-9 or Philippians 2:6-11, John 3:13-17**

*Jesus said to Nicodemus: ‘No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of man; as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. For this is how God loved the world: he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but so that through him the world might be saved.’*

**The cross, a sign of God's love for all**

Today, we celebrate the Feast of the exaltation, the triumph of the cross. For those who do not believe, the cross is a sign of weakness and foolishness as St. Paul states in 1Cor 1:23, “*a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles*”. However, with eyes of faith, we look at the cross and rejoice with the power of God’s love, which is a love that embraces the whole of humanity and us personally. “*Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends*” (John 15:13).

Let us allow ourselves to be drawn into this reality that God unconditionally and eternally loves us. Yet, it is not enough just for us to be contented with having God’s love. Instead, His love enables us to be His witnesses and love the world, i.e people who are loveable and people who are not, people who are similar to us and people who are different from us.

**Question for reflection:**

What does the Feast of the exaltation of the Cross mean to me?

**Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> September, Our Lady of Sorrows.**

**Hebrews 5:7-9, John 19:25-27**

*Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother,*

*'Woman, this is your son.' Then to the disciple he said, 'This is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.*

### Mary's sorrow at the cross of her son

When a loved one suffers, we suffer too. For Mary, she rejoiced with Jesus and suffered with Him because she deeply loved her son. Her greatest suffering was to stand by the cross of Jesus and watched her beloved child die.

As we contemplate Mary standing by Jesus' cross, she reveals that loving someone implies taking the risk to undergo suffering and pain. If we lock our heart up and try to protect it from being hurt and broken, this will only lead to an impoverished life. We, as Christians, are called to love others, and this includes allowing ourselves to stand by the crosses of others and suffer with them. Today, as we celebrate the feast of Mary of sorrows, let us ask our Mother to give us the strength to love as she did. Mary, Mother of Sorrows, pray for us!

### **Question for reflection:**

Am I afraid to accept the suffering that loving someone brings?

**Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> September, SS. Cornelius & Cyprian.**

**1 Timothy 4:12-16, Luke 7:36-50**

*One of the Pharisees invited Jesus to a meal. When he arrived at the Pharisee's house and took his place at table, suddenly a woman came in, who had a bad name in the town. She had heard he was dining with the Pharisee and had brought with her an alabaster jar of ointment. She waited behind him at his feet, weeping, and her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them away with her hair; then she covered his feet with kisses and anointed them with the ointment. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would know who this woman is and what sort of person it is who is touching him and what a bad name she has.' Then Jesus took him up and said, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' He replied, 'Say on, Master.' There was once a creditor who had two men in his debt; one owed him five hundred denarii, the other fifty. They were unable to pay, so he let them both off. Which of them will love him more?' Simon answered, 'The one who was let off more, I suppose.' Jesus said, 'You are right.' Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, 'You see this*

*woman? I came into your house, and you poured no water over my feet, but she has poured out her tears over my feet and wiped them away with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but she has been covering my feet with kisses ever since I came in. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. For this reason I tell you that her sins, many as they are, have been forgiven her, because she has shown such great love. It is someone who is forgiven little who shows little love.' Then he said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' Those who were with him at table began to say to themselves, 'Who is this man, that even forgives sins?' But he said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'*

### The great love of the uninvited guest

In today's gospel, Jesus was invited by Simon, the Pharisee, for a meal. An uninvited guest, a woman with a reputation as a sinner, turned up and started to wash Jesus' feet as an act of loving service. Simon looked and dismissed the woman as an unworthy sinner and Jesus for permitting this sinner to minister to Him. In His narrow-minded understanding, God would never mix with sinners. Jesus went on to tell him about the parable of the two debtors because He wanted to show Simon that this woman he regarded as a sinner was actually forgiven much by God, and thus, she could love much. On the other hand, Simon had little or no need for forgiveness from God because of his self-righteous attitude. As a result, he loved little.

Today, listen to Jesus telling us, "...I have something to say to you", and allow Him to say what He needs to tell us so that He may lead us out of our narrow-minded ideas about God and our self-righteous judgements against others. May we experience God's merciful love so that we can grow to become loving people.

### **Questions for reflection:**

What is Jesus' invitation for me at this time of prayer?

### **Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> September, St. Robert Bellarmine.**

#### **1 Timothy 6: 2-12, Luke 8:1-3**

*Jesus made his way through towns and villages preaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. With him went the Twelve, as well as certain women who had been cured of evil spirits and ailments: Mary surnamed the Magdalene, from whom seven demons*

*had gone out, Joanna the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, Susanna, and many others who provided for them out of their own resources.*

### Women disciples

In Jesus' time, Jewish women were a marginalised group in the patriarchal society. Yet, as we see in today's gospel, there were women who followed Jesus as He made His way through towns and villages, preaching and proclaiming the message of God's kingdom. This was an unusual sight for the Jewish people to witness women as part of Jesus' disciples. These women most likely heard Jesus' teaching and experienced God's love and compassion through His words and actions. Attracted by Jesus, they responded to His call and followed Him. Furthermore, these women disciples generously used their resources to help Jesus in His mission because they knew they had received much more from Him.

Today, let us rejoice with the reality that all people are called to follow Jesus. His love never excludes or discriminates against anyone. For Him, each of us is loved by God and is worthy to be His disciples. As His disciples, we are called to imitate these women disciples by using what we have been given to serve God and His people.

### **Question for reflection:**

In what way can I follow Jesus today?

**Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> September, 24<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**1 Timothy 6:13-16, Luke 8:4-15**

*With a large crowd gathering and people from every town finding their way to him, Jesus told this parable: 'A sower went out to sow his seed. Now as he sowed, some fell on the edge of the path and was trampled on; and the birds of the air ate it up. Some seed fell on rock, and when it came up it withered away, having no moisture. Some seed fell in the middle of thorns and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some seed fell into good soil and grew and produced its crop a hundredfold.' Saying this he cried, 'Anyone who has ears for listening should listen!' His disciples asked him what this parable might mean, and he said, 'To you is granted to understand the secrets of the kingdom of God; for the rest it remains in parables, so that they may look but not perceive, listen but not understand. 'This, then, is what the parable means: the seed is*

*the word of God. Those on the edge of the path are people who have heard it, and then the devil comes and carries away the word from their hearts in case they should believe and be saved. Those on the rock are people who, when they first hear it, welcome the word with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of trial they give up. As for the part that fell into thorns, this is people who have heard, but as they go on their way they are choked by the worries and riches and pleasures of life and never produce any crops. As for the part in the rich soil, this is people with a noble and generous heart who have heard the word and take it to themselves and yield a harvest through their perseverance.'*

### The sower never gives up

The parable of the sower speaks of the vulnerability of the seeds. Seeds need the right conditions to grow, mature and bear fruit. God is the sower who generously sows the seed of His Word of life and love into our lives. However, the environment in our life might prevent the seed of His Word from taking root and growing. Our lack of faith can lead us to harden our hearts to let the Word of God impact our lives. Hardships we encounter can shake our faith and make us turn away from believing in God's promise that He would be with us. We allow the worries, riches and pleasures of life to choke the Word. Although we sometimes allow God and His Word to be replaced by the demands and distractions of life, He never stops to sow His Word because He knows that we do have the capacity to be good soil where His Word will find a home within us.

God's extravagant love never gives up on us. May we receive His Word with a noble and generous heart, ready to bear a rich harvest for ourselves and others.

### **Question for reflection:**

What is the message that God has for me today?

**Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> September, 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

**Wisdom 2:12, 17-20, James 3:16-4:3, Mark 9:30-37**

*After leaving that place Jesus and his disciples made their way through Galilee; and he did not want anyone to know, because he was instructing his disciples; he was telling them, 'The Son of man will be delivered into the power of men; they will put him to death; and three days after he has*

*'been put to death he will rise again.' But they did not understand what he said and were afraid to ask him. They came to Capernaum, and when he got into the house he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the road?' They said nothing, because on the road they had been arguing which of them was the greatest. So he sat down, called the Twelve to him and said, 'If anyone wants to be first, he must make himself last of all and servant of all.' He then took a little child whom he set among them and embraced, and he said to them, 'Anyone who welcomes a little child such as this in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me, welcomes not me but the one who sent me.'*

### To be ambitious as Jesus is

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading today, St.James tells us, “*Whenever you find jealousy and ambition, you find disharmony and wicked things of every kind being done...*”. In the gospel, there was disharmony among the disciples because of their ambition to be the greatest, to be the most important. Jesus, knowing their preoccupation with being the greatest, identified Himself as a little child whom the culture of that time considered to be the least. Jesus wanted His disciples to strive for true greatness by serving, and above all, to help those who are most vulnerable.

What is the secret ambition that we carry in our hearts? To be respected by everyone? To gain prestige? To have power? Jesus invites us to desire to be great in God’s eyes, which implies a daily conversion and purification of our minds and hearts so that we can allow Jesus to shape our values, words and actions.

### **Question for reflection:**

Do I tend to ignore the call to be great in God’s eyes by humbling myself to serve others, especially to those society considers insignificant?

**Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> September, SS Laurent Imbert, Jacques Chastan.  
Andrew Kim Tae-gon, Paul Chong Ha-sang and companions.**

**Ezra 1:1-6, Luke 8:16-18**

*Jesus said to the crowds: 'No one lights a lamp to cover it with a bowl or to put it under a bed. No, it is put on a lamp-stand so that people may see the light when they come in. For nothing is hidden but it will be made clear, nothing secret but it will be made known and brought to light. So*

*take care how you listen; anyone who has, will be given more; anyone who has not, will be deprived even of what he thinks he has.'*

### To let the light of faith shine!

Like this lighted lamp that Jesus used in today's gospel, the light of our faith must shine through the way we live, the decision we make, the words we speak, the love we show, the actions we do. As Christians, we are meant to shine so that the people who come in contact with us might experience God's gentle and loving presence through us.

We have the responsibility to keep the light of our faith burn. In the gospel, Jesus also tells us, "*Take care how you listen...*". Every day, we listen to many noises and voices, and some things that we hear do not help us nurture our faith. Each day, we need to make space and time to listen to God's Word, which is the oil we need to make our light of faith burning brightly. The world today needs this light of faith, and thus, may we let it shine!

### **Question for reflection:**

How can I allow the light of my faith to shine so that others can come to encounter God's presence?

**Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> September, St. Matthew.**

**Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13, Matthew 9:9-13**

*As Jesus was walking on from there he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him. Now while he was at table in the house it happened that a number of tax collectors and sinners came to sit at the table with Jesus and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, 'Why does your master eat with tax collectors and sinners?' When he heard this he replied, 'It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick. Go and learn the meaning of the words: Mercy is what pleases me, not sacrifice. And indeed I came to call not the upright, but sinners.'*

### Matthew, a tax collector, called by Jesus

Jesus loves with an inclusive love. He has come for all people, especially for the marginalised in society. Jesus' way of love reveals God's heart that is full of mercy and compassion for His people. In today's gospel,

Jesus saw a tax collector, Matthew, sitting at the tax office, and called him, "*Follow me*". Jesus then went on to have a meal with other tax collectors and public sinners. The Pharisees could not accept Jesus' unconventional action of being friends with "not respectable" people. For Jesus, He came to bring God's unconditional mercy, not condemnation and judgement.

Today, as we celebrate the Feast of St. Matthew, let us rejoice in the merciful love of Jesus. Our flaws do not stop Jesus from believing and trusting in us. He always sees our future and potential to give ourselves for the mission and to be His faithful disciples to the end. May we, as Jesus' disciples, become channels of God's mercy to others.

**Question for reflection:**

Do I know and live out the meaning of these words: "*Mercy is what pleases me, not sacrifice*"?

**Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 25<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**Ezra 9:5-9, Luke 9: 1-6**

*Jesus called the Twelve together and gave them power and authority over all devils and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. He said to them, 'Take nothing for the journey: neither staff, nor haversack, nor bread, nor money; and do not have a spare tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there; and when you leave let your departure be from there. As for those who do not welcome you, when you leave their town shake the dust from your feet as evidence against them.' So they set out and went from village to village proclaiming the good news and healing everywhere.*

**Take nothing for the journey**

We, like the Twelve, are also sent out to share in Jesus' mission of proclaiming the Good News of God's love through our words and actions. In the passage, Jesus told His disciples, "*Take nothing for the journey*". But what does this mean for us today? It is unimaginable for us to go on a journey without getting ready for it. We want to feel that we control everything and be prepared, especially for all possible contingencies.

Jesus reminds us to let go of the need to be self-sufficient and to depend solely on God. It is when we surrender to God and allow Him to be the one leading us in the journey that we experience Him giving and providing us in the most unexpected ways. Often, He looks after us in and through the kindness and generosity of others. Thus, in participating in this missionary journey with Christ, He invites us to take nothing with us, i.e., let go of the need to control, be independent, and depend on God, who often provides through others.

### **Question for reflection:**

What prevents me from letting go of my need to control and be self-sufficient?

**Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September, St. Pius of Pietrelcina.**

**Haggai 1:1-8, Luke 9:7-9**

*Herod the tetrarch had heard about all that was going on; and he was puzzled, because some people were saying that John had risen from the dead, others that Elijah had reappeared, still others that one of the ancient prophets had come back to life. But Herod said, 'John? I beheaded him. So who is this I hear such reports about?' And he was anxious to see him.*

### To see Jesus is to live with Him

Herod was curious to see Jesus but did not act on it. Later, in the scene of Jesus' trial, Herod got the opportunity to meet Him. In fact, he questioned Jesus for some time and even demanded Him to perform some signs. In the end, he and his soldiers treated Him with contempt and mocked Him (Luke 22: 6-12). His curiosity and eventual meeting with Jesus neither opened his eyes to see God in Jesus nor led him to faith. Many other people wanted to see Jesus in the gospel, and their lives changed after encountering Him. For example, Nicodemus, the Pharisee, went to see Jesus in the secret of the night for fear of the criticism of the other Pharisees (John 3:1-21). His dialogue with Jesus marked him for life. In the end, Nicodemus became Jesus' disciple, and he was the one who buried Jesus' body (John 19:38-42).

Let us never get tired of asking, "Who are you, Lord?" and have the desire to know Him more and grow in our faith in Him. To see Jesus demands that we engage our lives with Him and become His disciples for life!

**Question for reflection:**

Who is Jesus for me?

**Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> September, 25<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**Haggai 1:15-2:9, Luke 9:18-22**

*One day when Jesus was praying alone in the presence of his disciples and he put this question to them, 'Who do the crowds say I am?' And they answered, 'Some say John the Baptist; others Elijah; others again one of the ancient prophets come back to life.' 'But you,' he said to them, 'who do you say I am?' It was Peter who spoke up. 'The Christ of God,' he said. But he gave them strict orders and charged them not to say this to anyone. He said, 'The Son of man is destined to suffer grievously, to be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and to be put to death, and to be raised up on the third day.'*

Who do you say I am?

*"One day when Jesus was praying alone in the presence of his disciples".* Jesus was a man of prayer. He was constantly in communion with God His Father, which was the source of His daily strength and peace. St. Luke, the evangelist, on other occasions, points out that Jesus would go off to a lonely place by Himself to pray. However, here in this passage, Jesus was portrayed as praying in the presence of His disciples. Even though He was with people, Jesus did not stop praying and being in communion with God. We sometimes think that we have to be in a quiet place to be in prayer. However, we can find God in the silence as well as in the crowd. May we yearn to always be in prayerful union with God even when we are surrounded by others.

Jesus once again asks us, "*Who do you say I am?*". This is a question that nobody can answer for us. The answer is expressed through our personal daily commitment to Jesus and our willingness to walk the path of discipleship with its pains and joys.

**Question for reflection:**

In this time of prayer, what is the message that Jesus has for me?

**Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> September, 25<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**Zechariah 2:5-9, 14-15, Luke 9:43-45**

*At a time when everyone was full of admiration for all he did, Jesus said to his disciples, 'For your part, you must have these words constantly in mind: The Son of man is going to be delivered into the power of men.' But they did not understand what he said; it was hidden from them so that they should not see the meaning of it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.*

### The joy of doing God's will

The people were full of admiration for the amazing things that Jesus did. However, Jesus was not caught up with the praises and respect of others. He knew that the capriciousness and fickleness of human admiration. What about us? Do we live for the approval and praises of others? Or do we fix our eyes on pleasing God and doing His will?

Today, Jesus knew that He would soon undergo the path of suffering. His unconventional ways of relating with the outcasts, standing in solidarity with the poor and preaching a God of love had rocked the boat of the Pharisees. He accepted that the cross was the consequence of His mission. Today, Jesus calls us to participate in His mission of doing good, standing up for the truth, working for peace, speaking out for injustice, etc. These actions might not make others praise and admire us. Instead, we might experience rejections, criticisms and persecutions. Yet, we keep on walking in the same path of our Master.

### **Question for reflection:**

What is the purpose of my life?

**Sunday, 26th September, 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

**Numbers 11:25-29, James 5:1-6, Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48**

*John said to Jesus, 'Master, we saw someone who is not one of us driving out devils in your name, and because he was not one of us we tried to stop him.' But Jesus said, 'You must not stop him; no one who works a miracle in my name could soon afterwards speak evil of me. Anyone who is not against us is for us. 'If anyone gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, then in truth I tell you, he will most certainly not lose his reward. 'But anyone who is the downfall of one of these little ones who have faith, would be better thrown into the sea with a great millstone hung round his neck. And if your hand should be your downfall, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into life crippled, than to have two hands and go to hell, into the fire that can never be put*

*out. And if your foot should be your downfall, cut it off; it is better for you enter into life lame, than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eye should be your downfall, tear it out; it is better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell where their worm will never die nor their fire be put out.'*

### What it means to be Jesus' disciples

What does it mean to be Jesus' disciples? In today's gospel, Jesus lists two main ways of what Christian discipleship means. The first is that Jesus' disciples are called to see the goodness in others, especially those who might not be "one of us" in the strict sense. It is not to dismiss the good works among others just because they are from different beliefs, cultures and practices. Instead, we should rejoice over the good that others who do not belong to the Church are doing, as Jesus said, "*Anyone who is not against us is for us*". Secondly, a disciple is to support others and not a stumbling block that causes them to lose faith in God.

Today, as Jesus' disciples, let us recognise and celebrate that God works through us and through those who do not belong explicitly to the Christian community. In this prayer time, let us ask God for the grace to be a bridge that leads others always to Him.

### **Question for reflection:**

How can I follow Christ in the way He wants me to?

**Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> September, St. Vincent de Paul.**

**Zechariah 8:1-8, Luke 9:46-50**

*An argument started between them about which of them was the greatest. Jesus knew what thoughts were going through their minds, and he took a little child whom he set by his side and then he said to them, 'Anyone who welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me. The least among you all is the one who is the greatest.' John spoke up. 'Master,' he said, 'we saw someone driving out devils in your name, and because he is not with us we tried to stop him.' But Jesus said to him, 'You must not stop him: anyone who is not against you is for you.'*

## To be great is to be like a little child

Often, we think that life is a competition in which we are constantly in a race against others. We need to compete to see who produces more, who is the best, who has more power, etc. We forget that God created humanity to be brothers and sisters, not competitors. In today's gospel, the disciples argued which one of them was the greatest, as the world understood it. Jesus, however, reminded them that His ways were different from the ways of the world. For Jesus, being great is to be like a child, i.e. weak, vulnerable, and contented to have no power or status. Rather than competing to be great, Jesus invited them to identify themselves as little children and that they are called to be great by serving, not dominating, the least, especially those whom society deemed as unimportant.

Today, we need to work for greatness by being like a little child. Let us respect, love and serve others, especially those without status and wealth, so that we grow more fully into Jesus' mindset, His values and attitudes.

### **Question for reflection:**

What does being like a little child mean to me?

**Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> September, St. Wenceslaus, SS Lawrence Ruiz & Companions.**

**Zechariah 8:20-23, Luke9:51-56**

*Now it happened that as the time drew near for him to be taken up, Jesus resolutely turned his face towards Jerusalem and sent messengers ahead of him. These set out, and they went into a Samaritan village to make preparations for him, but the people would not receive him because he was making for Jerusalem. Seeing this, the disciples James and John said, 'Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to burn them up?' But he turned and rebuked them, and they went on to another village.*

## Walking the way of Jesus

In today's gospel, James and John were upset that the people in a Samaritan village refused to welcome Jesus and the disciples. These two disciples wanted to seek vengeance by punishing these people. Jesus rebuked them, and He went on to another village. By doing so,

Jesus was living out what He taught and preached. He loved in the face of rejection instead of seeking revenge.

When we are rejected by others or hurt by their actions and words, we tend to be angry and want to strike back at them. Let us learn from Jesus' response in today's passage. Jesus did not call down fire onto the village as requested by the disciples because He neither gave in to His feelings of frustration nor allowed Himself to be swayed by the reactions of others. He simply moved on to another place. Thus, let us also learn to move on as Jesus did and to have His same compassionate love in us.

**Question for reflection:**

How can I become more Christ-like in my attitudes and reactions?

**Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> September, The Holy Archangels Michael, Gabriel & Raphael.**

**Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14/Revelation 12:7-12, John 1:47-51**

*When Jesus saw Nathanael coming he said of him, 'There, truly, is an Israelite in whom there is no deception.' Nathanael asked, 'How do you know me?' Jesus replied, 'Before Philip came to call you, I saw you under the fig tree. Nathanael answered, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the king of Israel.' Jesus replied, 'You believe that just because I said: I saw you under the fig tree. You are going to see greater things than that.' And then he added, 'In all truth I tell you, you will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending over the Son of man.'*

**To see Jesus is to see God**

In order to appreciate today's gospel, we need to refer to Jacob's dream in Genesis 28:10-22. Jacob was in the wilderness when he dreamt of a ladder linking heaven to earth. He saw angels ascending and descending on it. When Jacob woke up, he realised that the place where he was sleeping was the gate of heaven, the house of God. In today's passage, Jesus declares that He is now the ladder that linked heaven and earth. More than the angels which are regarded as God's messengers in the Bible, Jesus is now the true and ultimate messenger who fully reveals God and His love to humanity. In Jesus, who is God incarnated, we come to know God as He is, i.e. a God of love and compassion.

Thus, Jesus must be at the centre of our Christian faith. We need to be in a relationship with Him and allow His words to shape how we think, love and act. As we celebrate the Feast of the Archangels today, we are also reminded that we are called to be angels, i.e. messengers, and bring God's presence of love to those around us today.

**Question for reflection:**

How can I put Jesus at the centre of my life?

**Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> September, St. Jerome.**

**Nehemiah 8:1-12, Luke 10:1-12**

*The Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them out ahead of him in pairs, to all the towns and places he himself would be visiting. And he said to them, 'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to do his harvesting. Start off now, but look, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Take no purse with you, no haversack, no sandals. Salute no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, let your first words be, "Peace to this house!" And if a man of peace lives there, your peace will go and rest on him; if not, it will come back to you. Stay in the same house, taking what food and drink they have to offer, for the labourer deserves his wages; do not move from house to house. Whenever you go into a town where they make you welcome, eat what is put before you. Cure those in it who are sick, and say, "The kingdom of God is very near to you." But whenever you enter a town and they do not make you welcome, go out into its streets and say, "We wipe off the very dust of your town that clings to our feet, and leave it with you. Yet be sure of this: the kingdom of God is very near." I tell you, on the great Day it will be more bearable for Sodom than for that town.'*

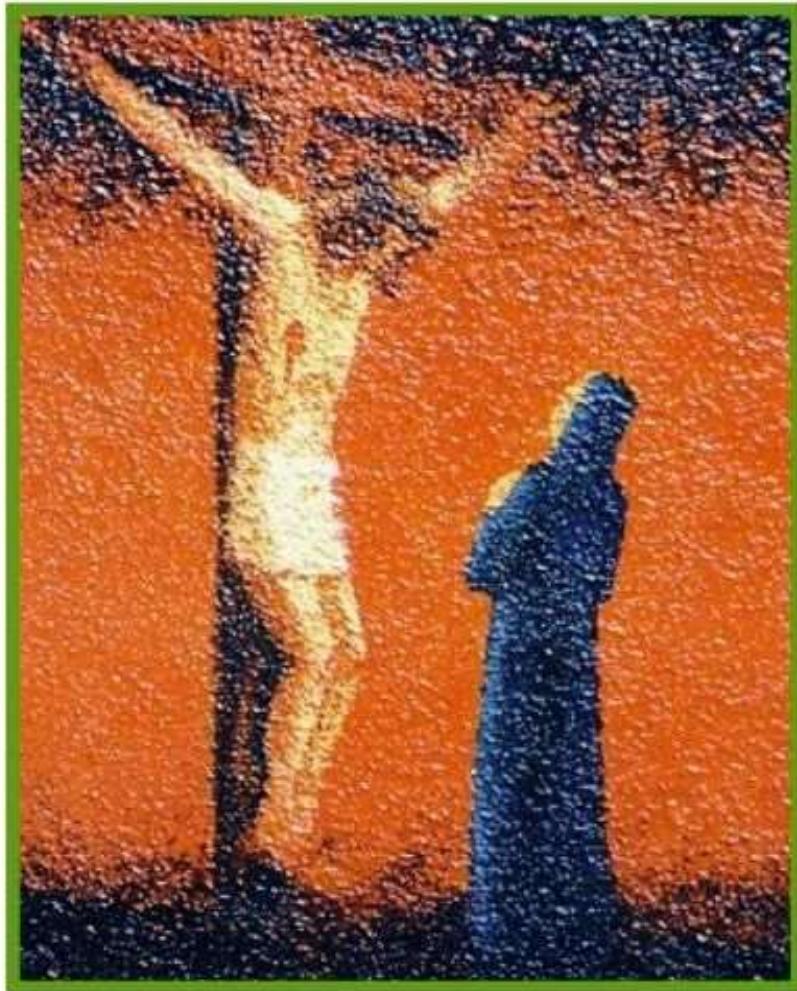
**God is here! This is the good news!**

Jesus sent His disciples out for the mission. He knew that they would face people who would receive them and those who would not receive them. Yet, the message they needed to give was the same for those who welcomed them and those who rejected them, i.e. "*The kingdom of God is very near to you*". The external reactions of the people that the disciples faced would not affect or change the reality that God was with them.

This was the Good News of Jesus: God is near because He loves His people. God is near to those who suffer and He cares for those who are marginalised. God is near and is at work to liberate His people from all that dehumanised them. Today, this is the message that we are called to share with those around us. Many people, especially those facing crises in their lives, need to hear this Good News. Even if they reject us, this Good News of God's love is still good news that remains true. Let us experience the closeness of God in our own lives and find strength in His love so that we can faithfully be His labourers in the mission field.

**Question for reflection:**

How can I preserve and share the good news to others?



verbum dei